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ABSTRACT

It is the role of schools and colleges to teach certain truths that can enhance the quality of one's life in society. Yet often these truths are not learned at school because many students do not accept them as truths, because they are not actually included in the curriculum, or because they are mistaught. These truths revolve around eight concepts--truth, literacy, education, knowledge, citizenship, democracy, power, and ideals--and each one is built upon an assertion. They are: (1) There is a difference between scientific and religious truths; (2) Literacy should include not only basics in skills and knowledge, but basics related to making judgments and taking action; (3) Both general and more specialized education are essential for successful coping; (4) Formal, abstract knowledge and practical knowledge are not incompatible, but are integral to one another; (5) Education for citizenship must encompass world-wide dimensions as well as the local components; (6) A democratic society requires dialogue and respect for others' opinions; (7) Power in a democracy must be exercised to enhance the well-being of all and not of a few; and (8) There are strengths and weaknesses in all systems of social ideals and their implementation. Curriculum development teams need to find ways of integrating these truths into the fabric of the curriculum. (DG)

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Significant Truths our Society Has Failed to Learn at School

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Quite a number of persons in our American society have failed to learn eight truths which are identified and discussed in this article. They are truths that educated persons, I am confident, agree are worthy of inclusion in the educational programs of our schools and colleges. Yet, they are often not learned at school, either because many students do not come to accept them as truths, or because they are not actually included in our programs, of if they are included, because the meaning and significance of many of them are obscured or contradicted by the ways in which our programs are structured or taught.

My contention is that there are very unfortunate consequences for both individuals and for the society as a whole when these truths are not learned. While our schools and colleges may not be the only places in which these truths should be affirmed, the failure of our educational institutions to do so should be a matter of concern since they remain the one locus capable of deliberately providing the opportunity for all persons in the society to come to know them and to think about them. If these truths are omitted, down-played, or rendered insignificant by our educational institutions, the overall quality of life in our society is diminished because persons will lack correct knowledge out of which to make their fullest contribution to the good of the larger society.

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These eight truths are stated in the form of propositions or assertions that should be understood and accepted as a part of everyone's education. They are about matters that are frequently misinterpreted and, thus, in great need of being addressed and sorted out in our school programs: ideals, power, democracy, citizenship, knowledge, education, literacy, and truth. The attempt here will be to clarify the meaning of each of them and to argue the importance of learning to know and to value an accurate interpretation of each of them. If the truth embodied in each of these eight assertions remains at issue by the end of this article, the broader dilemma I wish to illuminate, that our educational systems are sometimes ambivalent on these matters, will certainly be apparent. On the other hand, if these eight truths are recognized as desirable to be learned at school, educators will have to take responsibility for seeing that they are covered in our schools and colleges and for restructuring their educational programs when necessary to accommodate and to affirm them.

The first assertion is that <u>there is a difference between scientific and religious truths</u>. This is something all students really need to come to know. This is something which is ignored in large measure because we don't teach religion or religious truth in schools. Because of that, we also don't recognize sometimes that there is a very important distinction between the kinds of things that science teaches and the kinds of things that go under the label of religion or faith. The reason this is very significant right now, of course, is that we've got the controversy over evolution and creationism is rocking

the schools once again. Many science teachers are not well equipped to argue tellingly about the role of science or to explain adequately the difference between scientific statements and religious statements, let alone defend the particular way that evolution is being dealt with. I don't want to go into this whole controversy, except to cite it as a reason why this basic issue that I'm addressing is one that I think we've got to deal with in a better way than we have. For example, we have no courses in most high schools, and certainly not in most elementary schools, that would go into examining the alternative ways of knowing that exist across disciplines, not just in science as a whole but even within the sciences, or in the arts and humanities disciplines, or in the more synthetic disciplines like history, philosophy, and religion. We simply don't have any way of helping youngsters get some understanding that there are different ways of knowing. Probably the same could be said of many colleges and universities because it's often assumed that students pick up or grasp the fact that there are different ways of knowing by taking a bunch of different courses and recognizing that they are different fields, but seldom does anybody offer an occasion by which students can study, in a systematic way, a kind of overview of the alternative ways of knowing and thereby get some clear idea of the distinctions among them. Where I do see this sometimes occurring, where it is actually given some attention, is in college philosophy departments where you may have a course in epistemology, but, of course, very few people ever take such a course. I don't wish to raise anyone's expectations that

I will offer solutions or recommendations concerning each of the eight problems I will be raising here; that is not my intent. I am sure, however, that if people recognize the need to address these problems, solutions will readily come to mind. One option, however, in this case, would be to offer an overview course in high schools or colleges in the ways of knowing of the various disciplines. I see this also essential for our teacher education programs so that teachers at least, if few others in the university, can study an overview of the various disciplines and can become schooled in the essential differences among them for the sake of being accurate in how they interpret these matters to their pupils.[1]

The second point has to do with literacy, with what constitutes literacy. The assertion would be that literacy should encompass not only the basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic, etc.) and basic knowledge in various domains but also basics related to making judgments and taking action. By this I mean acquiring minimum capabilities to act in the world, socially or politically or otherwise. I would think of literacy as informed action, being able to do something, not just being able to have minimum command of the language or of numbers. This has become an important issue because of the back-to-basics movement where we tend to get relatively restricted in what we see defined as literacy. The public is so much concerned with the level of the basic skills and often does not recognize that there is more to being fully literate than the 3 R's. Our curriculums need to convey a notion of literacy that is much broader than the one the public frequently has or the one our curriculums often exhibit.

Two kinds of capabilities--cognitive literacy and expressive literacy--are needed if one is to take informed action. Cognitive literacy, in the sense of being able to take in stimuli and obtain understanding, includes the basic tools of language, number, and visual and auditory apprehension. Its use is with print, TV, other media, people, so that one can read or understand something presented to one's senses. Expressive literacy, on the other hand, entails being able to put forth to the world some statements, beliefs, or actions which are initiated from within a person. This kind of capacity is not ordinarily defined as literacy, but it is certainly among the basics. People need to be able to express themselves in writing, in speaking, in forms of action that represent an outward or expressive thrust, not just a taking in from the outside. Obviously, this broader conception of literacy is not at the present time terribly popular. The more common conception is one that results from the fairly narrow view of literacy that schools have fostered by the programs they have offered.

I would see the issue partly in terms of the difference between skills only versus a liberating education. Literacy involves, not just skills, but making judgments and choices on the basis of facts and knowledge, a view which the liberal education tradition has talked of a great deal. Somehow "the basics" has gotten limited just to skills and has left out this liberalizing dimension, which is really needed if one is to determine what to do with one's skills. The basics are acquired for a purpose, not just for their own sake--to live life as well as one can, to act in the world in ways that really cope with the realities out there. It is not just to be able

to fill out a tax form or to write checks but to judge at the polls who one thinks is a better candidate, and to make a multitude of other kinds of judgments, that really makes an education of some value. This requires both cognitive and expressive literacy. Our schools sometimes leave the impression that education for these long-term goals, what I have called here education for informed action, has been ignored in favor of the more short-range goals, the commonly accepted narrower forms of literacy. But one can have literate people, in terms of being able to read, write, and spell, who turn out to be absolutely incompetent in coping with the realities of the world if there isn't something more in their education than just the "basics." Coping well even with television requires skills of visual literacy and of interpretation far beyond mere mastery of the 3 R's. Many graduates of our schools and colleges have not yet discovered the truth that literacy has to be broadly conceived, both cognitive and expressive in character, if it is to be functional. They can point to the educational programs that they were provided in school and say that this broader kind of literacy was not sought or demanded from them. No wonder their own conception of literacy may be somewhat narrow.[2]

The third point has to do with the issue of depth versus perspective, or specialization versus general education. The truth is that a sound education is not a matter of either one or the other; both general education and specialization are essential if persons are to cope successfully with personal, family, civic, and vocational decisions and actions. We need people who are knowledgeable and

competent in depth in some areas, but not to the exclusion of breadth or perspective on a broad scale. It is very easy for curriculums to fall into a specialty orientation, where someone takes a major in something and never sees anything else outside the speciality. It's the old issue in curriculum of general education versus specialty education, which on reflection has been recognized as a false or non-issue, but which in practice often has come down to programs oriented more in just one direction or the other. In a curriculum design there has to be some way to formalize whatever balance one wishes to have between depth and breadth.

Present curriculum trends seem to favor a tendency to foster the specialty orientation at the expense of education for breadth and perspective--that is, for understanding, interpreting, and acting upon problems that do not fall exclusively within some realm of specialization and that cannot be dealt with alone by a cadre of specialists without reference to the interests of a larger public.

There are no doubt many explanations for this current trend toward speciality-dominated educational programs: high student interest in marketable skills that will enable them to compete favorably in trying to earn their livelihoods, perhaps the intellectual or practical attractions of centering early in a speciality and remaining in it for an extended period; general education offerings that may be weak or unattractively taught, causing students to shift allegiance toward other compelling programs of study. Whatever the reasons, general education is not now receiving the attention or support that its role in formal education would indicate is desirable. We need

to upgrade the role of general education without forfeiting the value or quality of specialization.[3] The task is not unrelated to the point made earlier about the scope of literacy and acquiring enough perspective to take appropriate actions to cope with the conditions of ordinary life. One has to live life as well as command a speciality role within the social structure. Living is more than simply knowing, doing, or being competent enough to earn a living; it entails finding meaning to one's life, facing experiences that all human beings face, and doing those things with knowledge and intelligence. Curriculums, and the way students are allowed to pass through them, must therefore be transformed to demonstrate the value of balance between depth and breadth and the significance of learning in both realms.[4]

A fourth point concerns the relative status given practical education and education in formal, abstract knowledge. The basic truth regarding this point, which is too infrequently picked up at school, is that <u>there is no necessary incompatibility between the demands of practical or vocational education and formal abstract conceptual education common to general or liberal education</u>. We have so often built into our curriculums a kind of bias against vocational education. People in other options will often look down upon those who take vocational education. In other cases, the bias is the other way. Vocational students will often look down upon the college prep students or the liberal arts majors. The structure of our programs contributes to these attitudes. It reflects either a view that the two types of education are incompatible or that each type is appropriate for certain persons headed in particular directions. Nothing

could be further from the truth. Everyone can benefit from, and therefore should have in his/her education, some dimensions of each of these types. Every college prep student should have practical and vocational skills. Every vocational student should have access to knowledge that is abstract. In fact, real skill cannot be acquired apart from such knowledge.

Abstract knowledge and practical knowledge can be thought of as integral to one another, not as opposites but rather as relatable. An individual needs both kinds. Courses and majors can include both kinds, inseparable rather than divisible, so that people do not have to choose between them. No longer would a person who started down one track find it inconvenient to switch tracks because of missed background, as is often the case now. Our programs and requirements can be structured to reflect the truth of these assertions, once the arguments in their favor are recognized as valid.[5]

While one can rather easily argue that vocational students really need math, chemistry, English, and so on, for their own purposes, to argue that college prep students need skill training and practical arts for their own ultimate benefit seems to some people a more difficult case to make. Perhaps it is less so when trying to argue their value for personal use than for vocational uses. Yet to argue in this way still assumes different tracks, different ultimate goals for two groups. And that is to argue on the basis of a false dichotomy. What is really being asserted here is that everyone, no matter what one's ability or destiny may be, needs both abstract and practical knowledge. Programs must require both. Of

course, the curricular solution is not to add the two types of programs together and put everyone through both; time will not allow this nor is that the way to integrate the two forms of knowledge. A reconstructed program that admits the need of both types for all students is what would have to be designed, and admittedly, this program could take more years to cover than either of these separate divisions of study now takes. Some things could possibly be thrown out if they fail to be justified in the context of integrating practical and abstract learning.

Both schools and colleges would come under the mandate of this kind of curricular reconstruction. We must find ways to reduce the number of both school or college graduates who are incompetent in certain practical affairs, and conversely, we must find ways to increase the number among those within trades, crafts, and technical programs who will also have at their command useful abstract or formal knowledge that prepares them beyond the requirements of minimum job performance. A really well educated person, to tie this point to the previous one about general and specialized education, must be one who is not handicapped by a lack of either practical or academic knowledge. The choices provided in our curriculums should not permit students to get the impression that one is more important or more useful than the other.[6]

The fifth truth that should be learned at school concerns the real nature of being a citizen and taking responsibility as a citizen for social and civic issues and their resolution. Education for citizenship has frequently left the student with a rather

narrow impression of what citizenship entails. A local, or at best a national, perspective is often embedded in our studies of citizenship and in our citizenship training programs. In an interdependent world such as ours, understanding citizenship in a local, state, or national context alone is really quite inadequate. Citizenship, and education for citizenship, I would assert, must be understood to encompass its world-wide dimensions as well as its national, state, and local community aspects.

We may be citizens of a particular town or nation, but we are also citizens of the world, and problems arise regularly that cannot be addressed nor solved without reference to the views and actions of persons outside our own borders. Nationalism or patriotism, as linked to citizenship responsibilities, are, of course, not to be denied, but what one does or advocates in behalf of these ideals has to be seen in the larger context of world-wide realities. Our social and political concerns must recognize the social and political realities of the larger citizenry of the world.

Some would say that we are not currently dealing very well in our curriculums with education for roles as citizens of our own country or in our own communities, let alone for roles as world citizens; therefore, they say we should concentrate first on improving the former, give it priority, and when this is in better order, then we can be concerned with education for global citizenship. This view overlooks the fact that there is an international dimension to almost every local, state, or national issue, and that to ignore this dimension is to see the problem incompletely and perhaps

to devise remedies that simpy won't work. The facts of our global interdependence are inexorably being pressed in upon us by the communications media. We cannot live in this kind of world without paying attention to international affairs and global realities, such as oil supplies/prices, clean air/water, economic resources, war and peace. To talk of citizenship in a way that does not recognize these kinds of global realities and the interdependencies among all levels of citizenship is simply not good enough.

The basic issue then is what should be the role of the schools and their curriculums in presenting a broader, less parochial view of the responsibilities of citizenship. There are certainly some implications for our social studies programs, regarding equipping people to participate effectively in each of these levels of citizenship.[7] Beyond this, however, education for citizenship implies transcending the familiar levels of citizen activity and giving attention to the cross-governmental, cross-national commonalities of interests and concerns characteristic of all peoples of the world. Recognition that being a human being, like everybody else in the world is a human being, requires us to give heed to matters that may not appear to be our own problems or high on our own list of priorities at the moment, but which stem from human concerns that we can recognize, were we in like circumstances, we would be concerned about (and we may already be in like circumstances but are as yet unaware of them). Education for being a human being and for what one can do in the world seems to be at the heart of this whole issue. It is education of the kind that fosters identity with, empathy for, solidarity with other human beings, wherever

they may live, rather than a more narrow, more chauvinistic, more limited view from one's own temporal or geographical perspectives. The search for common human concerns and values is part of this kind of education, and learning to think and to act in the interests of all, not just in one's own personal self-interest, is at the core of this kind of citizenship education.[8]

The next assertion that I believe requires attention in our curriculums relates to the fundamental principles of democratic life. A democratic society requires dialogue, deliberation, fair treatment, respect for other's opinions, the weighting of ideas in terms of what is the most judicious, the most equitable choice among possible public actions. This sixth assertion might appear to be already given due attention in our curriculums. But if recent tendencies in our society (toward dogmatism, holding to one's own views uncompromisingly, being quick to use the powers of government to impose one's own views upon others without benefit of much dialogue or critical assessment) are any indication of what many people have learned at school about democracy, there is considerable reason to suspect that the principles of democratic social and political life are not being taught or taught well, or if taught, are not being well learned and valued. (I disregard for purposes of this discussion whether or not our society tends to reinforce these principles in actual practice or may tend to reinforce many of those attributes that are at odds with democratic principles.) It is not that people should not hold or should not voice their strongly held convictions; the incredible thing is how people get the idea

that they should not explore with others who differ with them on important public matters some reasonable decisions and actions that take respectful account of these differences of opinion. Inherent in democratic processes is the notion that, through deliberation, certain erroneous or ill-founded opinions will be altered in light of new views and arguments brought to bear on a subject by persons of differing perspectives, and that that notion is a good one for all to adhere to because it gives rise to the possibility of agreements not previously foreseen. Fairer, more just, decisions and actions can thereby result.

The basic task is to deal with the concept of public decision-making as if it were constituted as a process of inquiry rather than as a matter of power or of winning for one's own viewpoint. That idea has perhaps been lost on a lot of people, if it was ever presented or absorbed as part of our teaching about the democratic process. The inquiry approach, considered in the context of public decision-making, requires a search for what constitutes the common good on the issues being deliberated, identifying various alternatives and weighing the pros and cons on each, and making judicious choices among them. It is much easier to fall into a kind evangelical dogmatism (and we have seen a lot of that lately) in which a certain position is accepted as right, and you run with it without benefit of debating it, without really being susceptible to persuasion by some alternative view, without recognition of its possible flaws as well as its obvious (to the holder) merits. Our democratic society may well rise or fall on whether or not we as a people are

willing to forego the pattern of "I'm going to assert my dogmatic position; you assert yours; if we come to blows, that's tough," as opposed to our being willing to engage in the more difficult deliberation and compromise characteristic of a truly democratic process. Exchanging views, listening to other people's arguments, debating what's really best in a given situation, and maybe even altering one's views--these are procedures that should replace what might be called unenlightened dogmatism.

Even the concept of voting, cherished highly as an instrument of democracy, cannot replace the necessary search for options worthy of being voted upon. Voting presupposes public discourse over the issues. The current breakdown of public inquiry as to better and better options, as well as the durth of public debate over the merits of any one of them, and the replacement of these by battles over candidate's personal records, the lobbying of single-issue special interest PACs, the lust for winning elections or votes on partisan bills at any cost--all these are signs in our times that demonstrate the inadequacy of our working concept of the democratic process.

Revitalization of a true concept of democracy must be undertaken, and our schools and colleges surely have a role in this.[9] Certain values underlie this necessary revitalization: mutual respect, tolerance of one another's ideas, a certain forebearance, refraining from putting someone down simply because their opinions differ from one's own, while not necessarily feeling compelled to give up one's own position, belief that through dialogue more

enlightened and equitable choices can be made, the recovery of civility in our public discourse.[10] Perhaps for the sake of these principles of democratic life, it is not too much to expect the schools to teach and practice these and related values.

Another truth about democracy that needs to be highlighted in our treatments of it in schools pertains to how power is exercised in a democratic society. In any society, (democratic or otherwise), power can be assumed by anyone or any group that wishes to attempt to do so, subject only to countervailing power exercised by others.[11] These contests of power, whether in politics, the economy, medicine, education, the mass media, or wherever, can become ruthless and unproductive, even sometimes violent, if they are not rule-governed contests. Such rules can be imposed in a manner that is either totalitarian or democratic. In the United States, at least with respect to governmental power, legislative power, as well as executive and judicial power, are defined by rules within the U.S. Constitution, and those of the various states and municipalities, in what is intended to be a non-totalitarian, democratic manner. That is, the decisions are referred to the body-politic and to their elected representatives to be discharged in the fashion described in the previous section relating to my sixth assertion on the democratic process. At times the American people may wonder whether this concept of governmental power, to be exercised on behalf of the common good and for the general welfare, has eroded in the face of pressures to acquire and to use governmental powers for less honorable, more selfish purposes. Nevertheless, the basic rules

are there, appeals can be made to them, or the rules themselves can be improved.

We must also recognize that the exercise of power in many other domains of our society, in labor, business and industry, education, health, etc., has gradually become somewhat more democratized; that is, the exercise of power within each of these domains is not considered to be the exclusive right of those within each domain, but subject as well to the interests and influence of people outside them who are affected by actions taken regarding them. Rules under which there contests of power are governed are by no means as clear or fully developed as those within the sphere of formal governmental power, though some of them are established and monitored within the authority of government. Thus, there is considerable possibility that power blocks operating in these non-governmental domains of society will function in chaotic, even exploitive fashion, rather than under democratic mandates to deliberate over alternative courses of action until reasonably satisfactory and equitable decisions are reached. Without rules to order these contests of power, there is little hope that they will be conducted in full adherence to the principles of the democratic process.[12]

What exactly do we teach about power in our democratic society? In our teaching about political and economic power I think we tend to give the impression that power is exercised for a particular domain of our society by those within that domain, that it is theirs to exercise freely with as little outside interference as possible (e.g., corporations exercising economic power, lawyers in the legal

domain, doctors in the medical domain). A look at the way power operates in our society would suggest that our concept of power is largely a matter of believing power is there to be grabbed and held under one's control by any means possible against all challengers. (Granted, some persons and groups do act more democratically than this at times.) The government is seen as the arena in which all the power groups fight each other to win advantage, rather than the government being seen as the trustee of power, the citizens' voice, destined to allocate or delegate it through laws and regulations so that no domain of society gains undue advantage, so that the common good may be enhanced.[13]

The predominant view of power does not seem to be this latter one. My seventh assertion is that we must learn that power in a democracy is to be exercised in trust for the common good, to be controlled and allocated by rules and laws designed to enhance the well-being of all and not of the few. This view of power is more in line with our ideals of justice and equity. To conceive of power in this way means that decisions in any particular domain of society must be made by duly authorized and constituted bodies concerned with the affairs of each of these various domains. They have to be structured and institutionalized in accord with norms that repudiate power grabs by some segment of the domain at the expense or exclusion of other segments or of the society as a whole. More positively, they must be structured in accord with norms that sanction deliberation through reasoned arguments among differing interests or perspectives until judicious and equitable decisions can be reached. This concept of power is a more fitting one for a democratic society that honors the rule of law over against the arbitrary exercise of power.

it is a truth, my seventh, that I believe needs to be taught and learned at school.

The eighth and final truth I think many people have failed to learn at school, and one that must be more adequately recognized and incorporated into our curriculums, is closely related to all the others already cited. It relates to the concept of our social ideals, their justification, and our treatment of them in our schools. I'll word this one explicitly in a moment, but first, some background.

Just as power, democracy, citizenship, knowledge, education, literacy, and truth can be misconstrued by those who have been through our educational systems, so, too, can the idea of "the worthy" or "the preferable." Whatever the ideals of a society may be--whether they be in the realm of political systems (domocracy, totalitarianism), in the realm of economic systems (free enterprise capitalism, socialism, communism), in the realm of social systems (open, class, feudal, militaristic), in the realm of religious systems (free, state controlled), in the realm of intellectual life (open access to knowledge and inquiry, expert authoritative guilds or sages, ideological conformity), or in the realm of personal aspirations (fulfillment of individual potential, subservience to communal expectations, equivalent to that of the animal kingdom)--these social ideals reflect a people's historic societal preferences. Choices among options have been made and these choices have come to be lived with over time. They provide direction, goals, criteria for the evolution of a society. They represent collective judgment about what is most worthy in each of these realms. They have a long, and sometimes complex, history of justification which each generation has

to come to know and to value. While not all persons may consider the same things worthy of their allegiance at any given time, there is sufficient subscription to these ideals to move the society along in that direction rather than in some alternate direction. Institutions are in place which support them and radical change comes about only very infrequently, when major shifts in ideals occur throughout a large portion of the society or when institutions are thought to be no longer in line with the prevailing ideals.

Considerable ambivalence seems to exist in American society about teaching the ideals that are a part of our tradition. On the one hand, some people feel that our commitment to freedom of thought and conscience means that we must treat all options as viable and let the younger (and older) members of our society come to their own judgments after open inquiry; others are quite willing to see the traditional ideals indoctrinated with little mention of any alternatives that the world may have known or experienced. On the other hand, some people are convinced that there is enough uncertainty about what our social ideals really are that they believe it would be quite difficult to teach them deliberately; others believe they are clearly identifiable and should be deliberately presented as our society's preferred ideals and explained and justified in the context of those not preferred by our society.

The truth is that acceptance of social ideals on the part of individuals can never be guaranteed by schooling. However, the schools' commitment to objective inquiry does not mean that all options have to be presented as equally valid in our society.

One needs to recognize that certain social ideals are characteristic of our society (I would say the first ones listed in the examples in each realm mentioned above) and that reasonable explanations and justifications for their being preferred and for their being embedded in our institutions do, in fact, exist and should be presented in school.[14] To ignore doing this represents an attitude of indifference about what individuals come to think about social ideals that borders on subscribing to social anarchy, if not outright subversion. Societal norms, widely if not universally held, are necessary for social cohesion and reasonably functional conduct of societal affairs. Consequently, we should not let a generation pass through the schools that does not learn what these norms are and why they have come to be held by our society. Those who may challenge these ideals or who may come to espouse some others (though at liberty in our society to do so) should never be driven to these alternatives simply because they were not exposed to the prevailing norms or, probably more importantly, to the arguments for adhering to them. Arguments do have impacts.

I would argue, nonetheless, that there is plenty of room to explore what these social ideals mean in concrete terms and what sorts of institutional arrangements best suit the purposes and activities that these norms imply.[15] Here, differences of opinion should be expected and much criticism of prevailing practices should be encouraged. These are but the necessary first steps to creating a society that truly exemplifies its ideals. Some re-evaluation, even of its norms, is desirable as circumstances change.

Exchanges over many of these issues, during one's schooling as well as in other arenas of social discourse, is to be considered healthy in our kind of dynamic society. Our problem is to avoid closing off these debates as if the problems were somehow completely settled already. Rigid interpretations of social ideals and doctrinaire adherence to particular formulas for implementing them simply do not wash in a dynamic, democratic society. Conversely, in dealing with the social ideals that other societies may hold, different from our own, we should not be so absolutist in our rejection of their traditions, institutional forms, and customs that we miss seeing the justifications they have developed, thus casting them in a role of unreasonable or evil (or enemy) societies. The truth is that there are strengths and weaknesses in all systems of social ideals and their implementation, given the circumstances in which these societies have to operate, and that continued criticism and revision of them is necessary if they are to continue to be worthy of allegiance.

This is my eighth assertion about what ought to be learned at school, and it strikes at the heart of a lot that is taught in schools on this topic. We neither have to treat our own system as so obviously of worth that it requires no special attention or rational explanation and justification to the young, nor do we have to avoid reasonable criticisms or ideas for improvement of it as if there were no possible flaws to be found. When dealing with systems that do not share our social ideals and ways of trying to realize them, the same rule should apply: identify their ideals as they see them, locate their supporting arguments, and critique them in

terms of their implementation and their circumstances. If there is an idea in their system worthy of borrowing for ours, or in ours for them, so much the better. No more of this "we are good--they are bad" mentality; it only leads to self-delusion or to unnecessary conflict. If we have handled the problem of social ideals in our schools unwisely or defensively, it is because we have misconstrued their nature and purpose and, consequently, have not treated them appropriately in our teaching. We should not fear asserting the norms we embrace in our society nor examining them as we would any other concepts in school, by careful inquiry, analysis, and evaluation. The deliberative mode is better for this purpose than the dogmatic or adversarial modes.[16]

I conclude this discussion of eight truths that our society has failed to learn at school by making a plea that we examine our curriculums to see whether these truths are being taught or conveyed in any manner through the mechanisms of schooling. Where we do not find that we deal with them at all, or do not deal with them appropriately, assuming we have compelling reasons for wanting to do so, let us make an effort to rethink our programs so that these truths can be made manifest. Curriculum development teams, especially, will need to discuss how to integrate these concerns into the fabric of the curriculum. School leaders and boards of education, of course, will have to sanction such inclusions in the program, if these matters are not already clearly within the guidelines currently in effect. But, if they are, program designers and planners can get immediately into the technical

process of determining how to incorporate the necessary structural or content changes into the current programs.

There is some urgency, in my view, for getting at the task. It revolves around the social consequences of failing to teach the truth, and the need society has for understanding truth, in the matters herein discussed. When religious and scientific assertions are not carefully distinguished (truth number one), we get into long, unnecessary arguments over church-state issues that are really issues over forms of truth and the state of knowledge or certainty in each. When we construe literacy (truth two) too narrowly, we get a percentage of people not able to make judgments or act in society adequately despite having gone through our curriculums. When we allow either general or specialized education to dominate our programs (three), we get graduates with insufficient depth or breadth, as the case may be, to deal with life in the slighted area, or to engage in discourse with others not similarly educated. When we allow either practical or abstract knowledge to dominate our programs (four), we get graduates who are crippled intellectually for tasks that require both kinds, which is to say, for a large variety of life's tasks. When we conceive of citizenship education parochially (five), we get citizens who do not think and act with global realities or pervasive human aspirations in mind. When we consider democracy as a means of gaining advantage rather than as a way of discovering mutually advantageous courses of action (six), we get divisive, intransigent, sometimes dysfunctional uses of the instruments of democracy, and if not an increase in

the attitude of cynicism, often a yielding to fascism. When we conceive of power as an absolute freedom rather than as obligation exercised under law (seven), we risk oppression, exploitation, or anarchy. And when we conceive of our social ideals and the ways we attempt to actualize them as being beyond criticism, rather than as preferred norms and processes capable of being changed or improved (eight), we risk falling into the trap of dogmatism, ideological defensiveness, and even overt conflict with those who differ on these matters. Surely, society has a stake in preventing the consequences of these incorrect views, and our schools an obligation to provide students with truths that correspond to reasonable norms of correctness in each of the eight areas I have discussed.

1. See, for example, Philip H. Phenix, Realms of Meaning (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964).

2. See Maxine Greene, "Literacy for What?" Phi Delta Kappan, 63, January, 1982, pp. 325-329, and Elliot W. Eisner, Cognition and Curriculum: A Basis for Deciding What to Teach (New York: Longman, 1982).

3. I leave the exploration of arguments on behalf of general education and for a more balanced treatment of speciality and wholistically-oriented education to the reader. Among the several helpful sources on the subject are: Chapters 10 and 11 in Harry S. Broudy, Truth and Credibility: The Citizen's Dilemma (New York: Longman, 1981); Earl J. McGrath, General Education and the Plight of Modern Man (Indianapolis: Lilly Endoroment, 1976); Jerry G. Gaff, et al. (eds.), General Education: Issues and Resources (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1980); Journal of General Education (Fall, 1982, entire issue); Educational Leadership (May, 1982, entire issue; R. Freeman Butts, The Revival of Civic Learning (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1980); Ernest L. Boyer and Arthur Levine, A Quest for Common Learning (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning, 1981).

4. Ernest L. Boyer, "Seeing the Connectedness of Things," Educational Leadership, 39, May, 1982, pp. 582-584; Mortimer J. Adler, The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto (New York: Macmillan, 1982).

5. See Gordon I. Swanson, "Vocational Education Patterns in the United States," Chapter II, in Harry F. Silberman (ed.), Education

and Work. 81st Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), especially pp. 46-47; G. B. Leighbodaz, "Vocational Education and the Humanities," in Louise M. Berman (ed.), The Humanities and the Curriculum (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1967); Marvin J. Feldman, "Making Education Relevant," in E. C. Short and G. D. Marconnit (eds.), Contemporary Thought on Public School Curriculum (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1968).

6. For a look at the history of one failed attempt to confront this fourth truth in both political and programmatic terms, see Arthur G. Wirth, Education in a Technological Society: The Vocational-Liberal Studies Controversy in the Early Twentieth Century (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980).

7. James M. Becker, "Goals for Global Education," Theory Into Practice, 21 (Summer, 1982), 228-233. R. Freeman Butts' decalogue of democratic values, discussed in his The Revival of Civic Learning (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1980), includes one value on this dimension of global education (number ten). See also H. Philip Constans, Jr., Fit for Freedom (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980).

8. Certainly this conception of citizenship education goes beyond plugging in a unit on global pollution in science courses, or one on the economics of world hunger in economics classes, and the like, as valuable as these might be. Attention to the study of humanity, not primarily to the study of cultural differences but to common,

shared values, may require a whole new thrust in some curriculums on the humanities. See Richard A. Kalish and Kenneth W. Collier, Exploring Human Values (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1981), Elizabeth M. Drews and Leslie Lipson, Values and Humanity (New York: St. Martin Press, 1971), Ralph H. Gabriel, Traditional Values in American Life (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), W. Ray Rucker, et al., Human Values in Education (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1969), and James L. Jarrett, The Humanities and Humanistic Education (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1973).

9. Maxine Greene, "Public Education and the Public Space," Educational Researcher, 11 (June-July, 1982), 4-9.

10. Glenn Finder, Tolerance: Toward a New Civility (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976); Glenn Finder, Community: Reflections on a Tragic Ideal (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980). For a discussion of some of the current circumstances in which the ideals of tolerance, forebearance, mutual inquiry and persuasion have broken down within educational discourse as well as over other kinds of public issues, see Ben Brodinsky, "The New Right: The Movement and Its Impact," Phi Delta Kappan, 64 (October, 1982), 87-94, and Richard Sennett, The Fall of Public Man (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976). For a treatment of what education might do in the face of these circumstances, see John Bremer, Education and Community (Melbourne: Australian Association for Community Education, 1979).

11. David Nyberg, Power Over Power (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); James G. March, "The Power of Power," in David Easton (Ed.), Varieties of Political Theory (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966); David Easton, "The Concept of Power," in The Political System (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967).

12. Far be it for me to know how to institutionalize such rules, whether by governmental mandates, by voluntary associations within a segment of society, or by a combination of both. This matter itself is worthy of public debate and resolution in order to allow legitimate issues among power groups to be addressed apart from the current, dominant struggle to attain exclusive authority by one power group or another.

The example in education, of the way rules have become institutionalized, is instructive, even if it has not proven very functional. The negotiations between public boards of education and teachers groups, in the context of state and national mandates, has often resulted in confusion and ineffective education. The public voice is sometimes thought to be muted in the process. The model here is largely an adversarial one rather than a democratic, deliberative one. Surely a reexamination of the rules of the game in this instance is required. See Myron Lieberman, "Teaching Bargaining: An Autopsy," Phi Delta Kappan, 63 (December, 1981), 231-234; and Wayne Buidens, Margaret Martin, and Arthur E. Jones, "Collective Gaining: A Bargaining Alternative," Phi Delta Kappan, 63 (December, 1981), 244-245.

13. Robert A. Dahl, Dilemmas of Pluralistic Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

14. Ralph H. Gabriel, Traditional Values in American Life (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963).

15. Philip H. Phenix, Education and the Common Good (New York: Harper & Row, 1961). See chapter two for an analysis of democracy of desire versus democracy of worth.

16. Stephen K. Bailey, "The Enveloping Polity," pp. 77-101 in his The Purposes of Education. BLoomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, 1976.